

SUNDAY HANDOUT FOR DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION - October 11th

Go After Them! (Matthew 18:1-14)

Aren't you tired of measuring yourself against others? We step into a room and consciously or unconsciously ask, "Where do I rank? How do I measure up?" In Matthew 18:1-14, Jesus takes a child - the least influential and impressive person in his society - and makes them a picture of true greatness in the kingdom of heaven. Instead of trying to measure up, become like a child. Instead of being consumed with status, take seriously how your life affects others. And when a follower of Jesus goes off-course, don't ever write them off – go after them!

1. Instead of trying to measure up, become like a child (Matthew 18:1-4)

2. Take seriously how your life affects others (Matthew 18:5-9)

3. Instead of writing off an apprentice of Jesus who has gone astray, go after them! (Matthew 18:10-14)

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read Matthew 18:1-14. Take some time to make observations about the passage. Just say what you see. What stands out to you? This can be anything at all.
2. Re-read verses 1-4. What does the disciples' question reveal about how they viewed greatness? How does Jesus redefine it?
3. Jesus says we must "turn" and "become like children." What does that mean - and where are you tempted to rely on your own strength rather than Jesus?
4. How does knowing your acceptance is rooted in what Jesus has accomplished free you from measuring yourself against others?
5. Read verses 5-7. Why does Jesus take our influence on other apprentices so seriously? In what ways can our lives become either a help or a stumbling block to others?
6. Read verses 8-9. Why do you think Jesus uses such extreme language? Where are we most tempted to manage or tolerate sin, and what might "cutting it off" look like practically?
7. Read verses 10-14. What does the shepherd's response to the wandering sheep reveal about the Father's heart toward his "little ones"?
8. How do Jesus' pursuit of us and his sacrificial death on the cross reveal the Father's heart? How should being pursued by Jesus shape the way we respond to someone who wanders?
9. Is there an apprentice of Jesus in your life who has wandered off course? What might it look like to go after them rather than write them off?

Ask Jesus to help you embrace true greatness in his kingdom by becoming like a child - humble, dependent and trusting in him. Ask him to reveal anything in your life that could cause you or someone else to stumble, and who he may be calling you to pursue. Thank him that he didn't write you off - he came after you.